

# THE MESSENGER



## OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA

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# CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA (White Sisters)

**ORIGIN AND AIM:** The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa was founded in 1869 by Cardinal Lavigerie, to rescue, moralize and regenerate the pagan and Mohammedan woman, and through her attain the family and society. Exclusively vowed to the Apostolate in Africa, the Sisters devote their lives to the natives in every work of mercy and charity . . . Catechetical, Medical, Educational.

## GOVERNMENT AND APPROBATION:

The Congregation is governed by a Superior General who depends directly on the Holy See. The Constitutions were definitely approved by decree the 14th of December 1909 and promulgated on the 3rd of January 1910.

**SPIRIT:** The Spirit of the Congregation is one of obedience, humility, simplicity, and zeal; and the life of the Sisters one of poverty, mortification and labor.

\* \* \* \*

The Congregation numbers over 1,500 Professed Sisters who are devoting their lives to the Natives in 120 Missions, that spread out through—

North Africa: Algeria, Tunisia, Atlas Mountains, Sahara.

West Africa: The Gold Coast, French West Africa.

East Africa: Kenya, Nyassaland, Tanganyika, Uganda, Rhodesia, Belgian Congo, Rwanda, Urundi.

Addresses in the United States

Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa  
White Sisters' Convent

Training Center

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Promotion Work Center

319 Middlesex Avenue Metuchen, N. J.

## THE MESSENGER OF

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## SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGES

Three Masses are said monthly for the living and deceased benefactors of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa. Moreover, they share in the prayers and apostolic labors of over fifteen hundred White Sisters, who are working in the African Missions; and in the prayers and acts of self denial that the Natives, so willingly, offer up daily for their benefactors.

## TO AVOID THE MISSIONS UNNECESSARY EXPENSE,

kindly notify us immediately of a change of address. If you do not, the postal authorities will tax us for their notification.

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## Our Lady of Fatima Visits Central Africa

**T**HE MIRACULOUS IMAGE of Our Lady of Fatima arrived in Mombasa on April 5th by train coming from Nairobi and other little places round there. This statue had traveled from Portugal accompanied by Father Demoutiez and Father Vemer. It had already stopped in West Africa, South Africa, Portuguese East Africa and Rhodesia on its way to Kenya. From Kenya it will go to Zanzibar and Tanganyika, leaving Port Reitz by air.

"You can imagine," writes a friend from Mombasa, "how excited everybody was. Quite a number of non-Catholics came to the station or to the church, to kiss the statue."

"On arrival at 3:45, it was taken to the church of the Holy Ghost by car, four Children of Mary accompanying it. At 5 p. m. there was a procession on foot, of the whole parish (some three thousand) to the White Sisters' Convent. There was a whole night vigil after that."

"Next morning there was Solemn High Mass, at which His Excellency Bishop McCarthy presided, and that evening, a torchlight procession, on foot, to Makupa Church through the main streets of Mombasa. The statue, on an open car, was again accompanied by Children of Mary in white and blue."

"The final procession," reports The Mombasa

Times, "took place from Makupa, on Thursday afternoon when Our Lady of Fatima was carried in a car procession—thirty cars took part—to Port Reitz. At the gateway of the R.A.F. Station, a Guard of Honor saluted the Statue and marched by the procession to the aircraft which was to take it to Zanzibar."

(In an interview, Father W. O'Neill said he had been given the task of booking accommodation on the aircraft to Zanzibar for Father Demoutiez and Father Vemer, who are travelling with the Statue. He booked the Statue as a passenger, and the ticket was issued in the name of the Virgin of Fatima.)

"While the crowd waited for the plane to take off, prayers were offered and hymns sung in honor of Our Lady. The Guard of Honor lined up beside the plane and after a final farewell message given by Father Farrelly, a bouquet was presented from the people of Mombasa, and the Statue was placed in a seat in the plane."

"So came to an end the triumphant visit of the Pilgrim Virgin to Mombasa . . ."

"After visiting Zanzibar she will go to Tanganyika, Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Tripolitania, Algeria, Goa and India; thence to China, Australia and Japan, North and South America."

"She will then go round the capitals of Europe."

(The Mombasa Times, April 9, 1949.)

### How They All Love Our Blessed Mother



# Our Educational Trip

By the Students of St. Scholastica College,  
Virika, Uganda

(Continued from May-June)

24th p. m.

We were expecting the Mission airplane to arrive, and the Sisters took us all with them. We were very excited inside, just imagine we were going to see a big airplane coming from Europe, bringing Missionaries to us. We passed Kisubi, reached Entebbe which is twenty-five miles from Rubaga. The Sister first stopped at the White Fathers to get information and we went to the airfield. You could hear nothing there, and nothing from us, we were feeding our eyes! There was a small plane there, we were allowed to go near, Sister took photos of us, but all the time I wondered that no one had ever told me that an airplane is like a very big fish, with a tail and fins.

Then we heard a noise in the air, and here was another; we were more than excited but it was for nothing, it wasn't the big Mission airplane. However, we were glad to see it arriving and coming right near us to find its place. The Fathers who were there were very kind and explained everything to us; then we were told that the big one would not come that day, so we went back to Rubaga hoping to come back the next day.

Regina Mukabalangira.

25th a. m.

When I was in the lower classes, I didn't even know that there was a Makerere, but now, when Sister told us that we were going there for a visit, I was so excited that in two minutes I was in uniform and ready to go. We first went to the Education Department, we were wondering if we would be allowed to see Miss Neatby and Miss Koeune, and we did. Miss Neatby showed us her office, and some of us talked to Sister on the telephone. We also tried the electric lights, but we were glad that no one asked questions about electricity, who would have answered? Miss Koeune went to work after telling us that she would soon come to see us at Virika, and we also said good-bye to Miss Neatby and felt that we were saying good-bye to a mother.

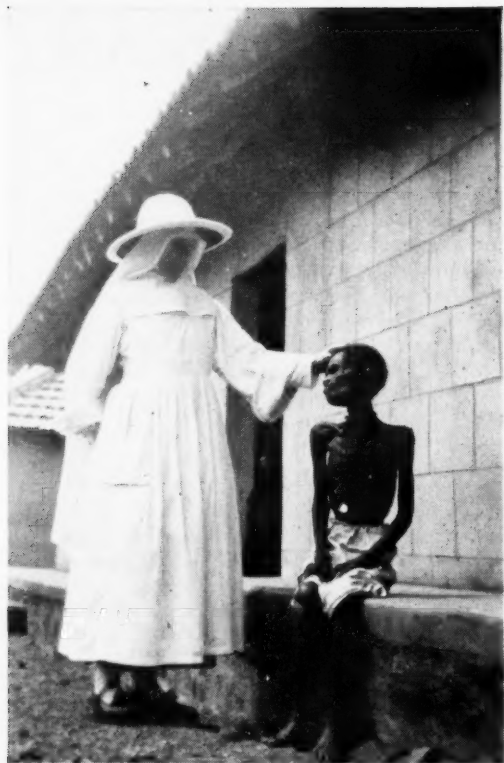
Then we went to Makerere College, a huge building with very many windows; we only stood on the spot, at the entrance, and Sister, who had gone in, had to come back for us, we had not moved an inch! At the Information we were given a Student to take us around and we followed Sister as sheep; being afraid of getting lost. The floors were so slippery, I fell down twice, and I still feel ashamed when I think of it, the second time was worse than the first. What interested me most was the Chapel, the Library, and the Art exhibition. Who would have thought that a library could have two floors? Now, I see the value of reading, and I realize what a poor student I am. We were lucky to be there the days of the Exhibition of Arts;



Our Parish Church

Our Lady of  
the Snow

Virika, Uganda



**A Victim of Hunger Comes to Kisubi  
To Be Nursed**

some paintings were made years ago, and we could see with our eyes that Uganda has progressed, and it makes me put my nose down when I think of my scribblings. The Artist I loved best was Sekintu. The clay work, was very interesting to us. How thankful I am for having seen Makerere College.

**Angelina Tibahwabunuzi.**

**25th p. m.**

At noon we heard that the Mission plane would arrive at Entebbe that same afternoon. In a few minutes we were ready and did not even take time to eat. When we reached the airfield we saw that so many Missionaries were there already; we were very happy to be with them all. After waiting an hour or so, we heard the noise of the motors and there it was over our heads. Were we excited or were we not? It landed, turned and to our great delight we saw White Sisters in the windows. Nice or not, we shouted, and it made people laugh. They all came out of the plane with a smile, and we smiled too.

All the Missionaries seemed to be of one family and to tell the truth I thought I was a Member too. When all the Missionaries were out, we were given permission to have a peep inside, it made my head turn.

We left the airfield to go and visit the Blue Mothers (Sister of Mary Reparatrix), where we had Benediction, it was like Heaven to us.

Then at Kisubi, the Sisters invited us to tea, and is there a greater luck for a Rwenzori girl than that of eating bread that had been bought in Rome? That's what we did. We had been given bread by the steward of the airship, and at Kisubi we finished it all, very much impressed to think that it came from Rome.

Thanks to everybody, kindness seems to have no end.

**Magdalena Mbonabibi.**

**26th a. m.**

Very early in the morning the Mission airplane went, carrying away a lot of Missionaries that we knew and loved. Father Levesque, our Educational Secretary, was one of them. In a way, we were glad not to be there at the moment, it would have made us sad, even yesterday when we asked Sister why Father Levesque wasn't as jolly as before, she only answered: "You'll see more than a sad face when I leave!" We understood. Two Sisters from Mbarara also left; we are sorry, for we loved Sister Ambroise very much; her sister we didn't know very well, but I don't like to see people go.

At 8 a. m. the whistle blew . . . two short blows which meant that Sister would be ready in five minutes, so we quickly ran to the school bus, not to be left behind; we were going to see the great European hospital, and Buloba College a P.T.T.C.

The European Hospital is at the top of a hill, away from the shops, cars, etc. It looks so clean it made me think that I had forgotten to put order in my desk before leaving! We were not allowed to visit it, we were too early, but we saw Edith Mary one of our girls who is married to Leo Sharp, of the Dental Department.

From there we went to Buloba. The College is away from the town also, and on a hill; we see the country all around, it is a beautiful place indeed. We thought we would be afraid of the Students but they were so gentle and so kind that we forgot to be afraid and silly. They served tea to us and we surely enjoyed it; if they would only

( Please turn to page 33 )





**W**HEN A GIRL has made her final decision and has been accepted for admission in the Congregation, she enters on a fixed date to begin her religious and missionary training which is made in three periods.

The first, the **postulancy**, lasts six months—it is a time of introduction to the new life.

It is followed by the **novitiate** which lasts one year and a half. This period of training begins with the Ceremony of Clothing in which the postulant is invested with the Habit of the Congregation, and it is fittingly brought to a close by the Religious Profession of the novice. The fixed dates of these red letter days come twice a year on May 1st or 2nd, and the last Sunday of October, Feast of Christ the King till November 1st, All Saints.

The Novitiate is a period of probation and trial during which the superiors help the candidate to become a White Sister, while they judge whether or not she meets the standards, and during which she decides whether or not she wishes to live the life of a missionary Sister in Africa.

For these first two periods, the Training Center in the United States is at Belleville, Illinois. Our Convent is located on state highway #159, between Belleville and Col-

## The Training of a

linsville, the postal address is R. R. 2, Box 23.

These years of training over, the day of first profession arrives when the novice makes her temporary vows of obedience, poverty and chastity. These she will renew annually for six consecutive years before she is admitted to final and perpetual profession.

Her first Profession is normally followed by her departure for Africa, where she will spend **one year** at the Motherhouse, St. Charles par Birmandreis, (Alger) Algeria. This year, of **specialized missionary training**, groups Sisters from all nations, that they may acquire that Catholicity of spirit, a distinctive mark of the White Fathers and White Sisters. The Sisters are also initiated theoretically and practically to the various mission methods and works of the Institute before receiving definite mission assignments or being sent to pursue higher studies.

Sister Virginia-Marie (Miss Gloria Indelicato, Everett, Mass.), who was professed in October 1948, tells us of her first experiences at the Motherhouse.

### "November 28th

"Just to tell you we arrived safe and sound here in Africa. The trip was very nice. Eight days on the boat, then twenty-five minutes on the plane from Gibraltar to Tangiers, Spanish Morocco, and about thirty-eight hours on train from Tangiers to Algiers and here we are at the Motherhouse.

"The French Sisters are not here as yet because there is a strike in France, and the German Sisters are still waiting for their



# f a White Sister

necessary travelling permits, it is not easy for them to leave their country. We are praying that they will soon all have joined us here. It is so nice to see all the Sisters from different countries living together for the love of God and to work for the salvation of souls.

"It is winter here so it is not too hot, but it's not cold for the flowers are still with us."

"December 26th

"Your letter by Air Mail took six days to get here, so don't be surprised if my letters reach you late, it is only because of the distance.

"It is not hot here yet for it is winter. Last Monday I started to work in the Dispensary. The Sister in charge showed me how to give injections, the first few times I was afraid to enter the needle, the Sister said don't be afraid, go right ahead. But now I am hard hearted and I can push the needle in. I cannot give an injection in the vein yet, for I need to get the Doctor's permission first. Most of the people who come here know only Arabic. I just know a few words like: 'I have cold, a fever, etc.' That's not much so when they come to me with their long stories, I smile or look sad, when I think I should, after that I take their card and read what they need. It is very nice to work in the dispensary but I only wish I could understand and speak with those who come to us.

"This year we are spending at the Motherhouse is not really the missions, for we are still training here for the missions. We do a



Sister Virginia-Marie,  
when a Nurse.



Sister M. Thomas More and  
the Postulants at Belleville,  
Illinois.

Nora will know how to  
ride a bike before she  
arrives in Africa, and so  
will they all . . .

lot of studying, we also go to visit the Arabs who surround us.

"Oh! another thing, you know in Europe there are not many cars, everyone goes on bicycle. I'm the only one that doesn't know how to ride one. Here that is the best way of travelling, so one afternoon they showed me how to ride one. The first time they all laughed to see me, but I think after one more lesson I'll be able to do as well as anyone else.

"Tell Nora I'm praying for her not to worry over anything for she has perfect health, all she has to learn to do is to eat well and God gives His grace to all who ask for it."

"January 1949

"God bless you. Yes, I did receive all the



## Some Nurse or Teach...

Christmas cards and what do you know? In Europe they don't send so many cards as we do, so the other day our Superior made me put all the cards on the table so that the Sisters from Europe could see them. They liked them very much. I told them that at Easter time you send more, and I will show them all to them.

"When you will receive this letter, Nora will have entered the Postulate in Belleville. I pray for her and I am sure she will make a good White Sister.

"Yes I am already used to Africa, it is really a beautiful country, more beautiful than in the books. Every time I see an Arab pass by, I ask myself if really I am here at last.

"It was good to hear that so many boys from home want to become Priests. I will pray for them. To think that a few years ago, we were all in school together, and today we are together in God's Service, soon one day we will be together in Heaven.

"Please pray for me and the missions. I'm praying for you.

"Your loving child,

"Sister Virginia-Marie, W.S."

(From letters written to Sister's Family. May God bless the generous Father and Mother who have already given four daughters to God's Service.)

## A QUESTION

In our day there are over 1600 White Sisters who staff 137 mission stations in North Africa: Algeria, Tunisia, Sahara; West Africa: the Gold Coast, French West Africa; East Africa: Uganda, Tanganyika, Nyasaland, Kenya, Rhodesia, Belgian Congo, Ruanda, Urundi;—and 33 recruiting houses in France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, England, Switzerland, Canada and the United States.

There is need for many many more sisters. Is Christ waiting for you to take His message to Africa? He will not force you to go, but, if He is calling you, you can be sure He will grant you all the graces necessary to live the life when you do consent to answer His invitation.

## Others Do Social Service...



## OBITUARY

- Rt. Rev. Msgr. W. Lee, Geneva, N. Y.
- Rev. J. McGillicuddy, Holyoke, Mass.
- Rev. G. Murphy, Arlington, N. J.
- Rev. E. J. Kern, Arlington, N. J.
- Mr. Rosario Aita, Guild Member, Jersey City, N. J.
- Mrs. Hermond, Manchester, N. H.
- Miss Ann Driscoll, Jersey City, N. J.
- Mr. Lawrence Dambach, Perth Amboy, N. J.



# A Few Answers

## Are Natives Grateful to the Missionaries?

Mother St. Eugene had been many years in Bukumbi, a mission on the shore of Lake Victoria, Tanganyika, when she was transferred to Mwanza about twenty miles from Bukumbi. Her former pupils did not forget her and very often they come on foot to pay her a visit and show her their children, her grand children as they proudly say.



Sister and a Group of Natives

The accompanying photo shows a group of three mothers with their children and the husband of one of them. It is also somewhat of a fashion show of this day Africa: one wears a regular dress, another wraps herself completely in two pieces of material, the other one covers only one shoulder with her piece of material, while the fourth passes the "nguo" under the arms while the baby, she carries, has a bonnet which was probably knitted by the school children at Bukumbi. The man wears a white gandoura, or Arab tunic, as many of his countrymen do.

Sister M. Prisca, W.S.

## What Becomes of Twins in Africa?

Of course we do not pretend to give a general answer but merely cite the situation in one little corner in Ukerewe and surroundings. About two months ago, a Mukara arrived at the Boarding School carrying a large box on his head, accompanied by his sister and a young boy. Can you imagine what was in the box? Two newly born babies, twins, white and pink and healthy too. (Colored and white babies are alike when born.) Poor babies! Their mother a real Mukara, with all what it means of superstitious fears

and practices, wanted to kill them as she had done with her previous twins. You know that in Ukara, twins are thought to bring bad-luck to the family, and therefore must be killed. So, when the father saw that his wife was decided to kill them, he brought them here. I asked him who had told him to do so. "Nobody, but in myself I thought that I would find help nowhere but at the Catholic Mission, and I forcefully took the babies from their mother's arms, and here I am."

Foreseeing he had brought food, thinking he would more easily find place at the hospital. At night, Nyangaro, the mother, arrived in her turn. We told her that if the children died, she would be accused of having killed them as she had already done with her first twins. Frightened out of her superstitious beliefs, she began to care for them, and now she really loves them. Soon they will be returning to their home. We believe that with her husband, Esunga, Nyangaro will continue to take good care of the babies. She was much encouraged by the sight of Perpetua and Felicita, the first Bakara twins we saved five years ago. They are still living, and the foreseen bad-luck has not come.

Mother M. Engelberta, W.S.  
Ukerewe, Tanganyika.

# A Sorcerer Quits

NO ONE REMEMBERS the day when a certain devil inspired Bino (a man with big long teeth) to leave his native land North of Uganda and establish himself as far south as our Bunyoro district. This inhabitant of Madi finally settled at Bukerenge, ten miles west of Hoima, which is the capital of Bunyoro, where the White Fathers and White Sisters have a mission center.

Bino meant to earn his living in an easy way, and made the most of the fact that he was a stranger, that he had a commanding appearance, eloquence, and plenty of wit; he posed as a sorcerer and charlatan. The unsophisticated and superstitious inhabitants were quickly won over to the mysterious personage.

Bino became a soothsayer, boasting that he had relations with the spirits of darkness and that he could cure all illnesses. His salary was always the nicest goat of his clients, which he devoured with a pantagruelian appetite. He had received more than five hundred of them, when one day God's grace touched his soul and enlightened him. He resolved to become a convert, after the example of many pagans who had renounced idolatry for Catholicism.

To the astonishment of his many friends, and God knows how numerous they were, Bino the sorcerer, urged on by a special grace from above went regularly to the Catechist of his village to study and learn the eight prayers exacted from those who desire to prepare for baptism and to be enrolled in the catechism classes of the old folks. Before taking this step, Bino had sent away all his wives and kept only one who joined him on the roll of the catechumen, hoping to be baptized at the same time as her husband. A severe trial was awaiting Bino!

Suddenly his wife became seriously ill, and it appeared that she had arrived at the mission just on time to become a child of God. She was baptised and immediately departed for Heaven, there to pray for the one who had so generously and so completely

turned to the God of all Truth. The fervent neophyte was not discouraged and pursued his instruction into the Faith; two months later, he was baptised, receiving the name of Peter.

A month after his Baptism he returned home, but the missionaries had imposed a heavy duty on him. "Petro," Father Superior had told him, "you must make up for your scandalous conduct; you have abused of the credulity of ignorant people, you have extorted their goods and caused them much damage. You cannot refund them, you yourself are poor, but you can render them good for the evil you have done them. As soon as you arrive home, take your old age stick (Petro was sixty) and go through the country, entering each house, make your confession. You will tell each and everyone that you have deceived them, that you had less confidence than they in the devil, and that you ate their goats because you loved meat, that your conduct was deplorable, will they please forgive you and accept to imitate you in breaking away from idolatry to believe in God, the Creator of Heaven and earth and in Jesus-Christ, the Saviour of us all." Peter obeyed.

These poor old pagans listened to him stupefied, and would question: "Bino, Bino, do you really mean it? Is it true that we have been fooled? How could you after so many transgressions abandon your wives and your means of livelihood? Are you earnest about it?" — "Most sincere," would answer Peter, Bino. — "In that case we shall all learn to pray and become Catholics" would they repeat one after the other. Soon the chapel of the out station at Bukerenge was too small to contain all the converts. It was especially the old folks who had been disabused and were asking for Baptism, which they received after complying with the regulations of the Vicar Apostolic.

Sister M. Victorinus, W.S.  
Hoima, Uganda.

# Our Educational Trip (Concluded from page 27)

come to visit our P.T.T.C. at the end of the year, we would be delighted. They showed us their handwork and their apparatuses, we congratulated them. All the way back to Rubaga we talked about our good luck of having seen another P.T.T.C. at work, their holidays will be later.

Gabriella Nantale.

26th p. m.

We passed through Kampala and were taken to Mulago Hospital where most of our Doctors and Nurses are trained. We were very glad to see a Nurses' Training Centre and we admired the Nurses' dear little cap. Of course we are not used to that kind of work and I don't think I could be a good Nurse, but I admire their work very much. An old girl of ours, Veronika, took us everywhere and we surely made good use of our time; we were so busy visiting that we forgot that Sister was waiting too long in the car and she sent someone to fetch us. From there we went to see the Nsambya Hospital kept by the Franciscan Sisters; as it was a bit late we did not visit the hospital but we went all around the place by bus; it's a wonderful thing to see such well organized hospitals in Uganda, but I thank God that I am a good, healthy girl, able to go and visit interesting places in Kampala and its neighborhood with the other top-class girls of St. Scholastica's College.

Perpetua Nyabayenje.

27th

During the evening of the 26th, we didn't know if we should cry or laugh; all week we had been so busy looking at the most interesting things that our heads were turning and our legs were beginning to refuse going quickly, and we felt it was time to go Home. On the other hand we wished to stay and learn more about the Capital, and we understood very well what we learn in Methods of Teaching: "Children learn more by seeing than by hearing." In the morning we were up early, we cleaned up, and when Sister came she was surprised to find the Students in the bus already, for once, she was the last one to get in.

No one talked nor sang for a long while and we came very nicely till Butiti, twenty-five miles from here. We found out that the radiator was trying to jump out of its place, it was so hot; we were very angry with it for it never before had given trouble while carrying us. We had confidence in Our Lady, and in Abdala, our driver, and hoped to get home just the same. Every mile we had to put in water, and at six p. m. we triumphantly turned into the avenue to our dear Home sweet Home, Virika. My heart was beating so hard that I couldn't join in the chorus: "Mid pleasures and palaces, etc." Abdala drove us in front of the school and with one voice we all said: "However nice other schools may be, there is nothing like our own school, and don't forget that it belongs to the White Sisters!"

Angela Tibazindwa.

Messenger of Our Lady of Africa  
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